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ABSTRACT

This report analyzes the outcomes of the Running Start Program, part of Washington State's 1990 "Learning by Choice Law," which was designed to expand educational options for high school students. The program allowed high school juniors and seniors to take college-level classes at the state's community and technical colleges and earn credit concurrently in both college and high school. The report finds that the grade point average (GPA) for Running Start students is comparable to two-year college students. The average GPA for Running Start students after transfer to the University of Washington was 3.13. The demographic statistics for Running Start for fall 2001 are as follows: (1) 58% were female; (2) over 18% were ethnic minorities; (3) average credit load was 11-12 credits per quarter, while many students took a 5-credit course and the balance of classes at their high schools; (4) 2% were students with disabilities; (5) 42% of the students worked part time, while 1% worked full time; and (6) 87% of the students were enrolled in academic transfer courses. (NB)

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ED 476 686

State of Washington

# State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

# Running Start

# 2001-02 Annual Progress Report

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# RUNNING START

## ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
## 2001-02

Running Start is a program that allows eleventh and twelfth grade students to take college courses for free at Washington's 34 community and technical colleges and Washington State, Eastern Washington, and Central Washington universities.

- Running Start reduces the amount of time students spend in school and reduces college costs for students and their families. In 2001-02, students and their parents saved $17.4 million in tuition.
- The program saved taxpayers $34.7 million since students take high school and college courses simultaneously.
- Running Start students perform well while they are in the program and after they transfer to universities. In 2001-02 Running Start students earned an average grade point of 3.13 after transferring to the University of Washington.

The 1990 Legislature created Running Start as a part of the "Learning by Choice" law, which was designed to expand educational options for high school students. To initiate the program in 1990, the Legislature authorized a two-year pilot program. Five community colleges were selected to participate during 1990-92 (Everett, Pierce, Skagit Valley, South Puget Sound and Walla Walla community colleges). The pilot program involved 358 students from 37 high schools. The program began statewide in 1992-93, when about 3,350 students enrolled at the community and technical colleges. The 1994 Legislature expanded the program to include three state universities (Washington State, Central and Eastern) to provide Running Start program access to communities where no two-year colleges were available to directly serve students.

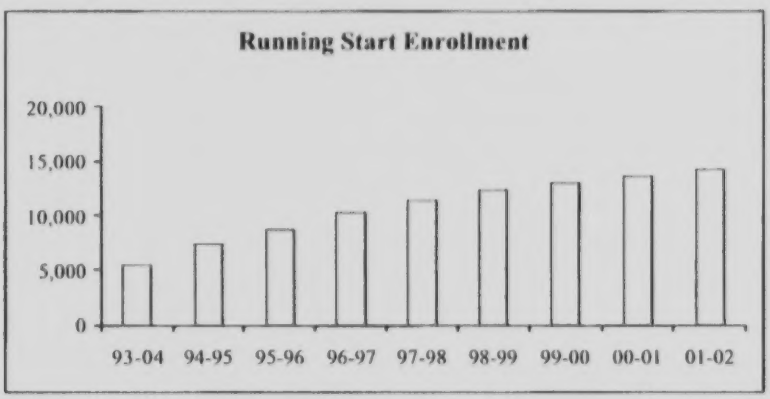
### Running Start Creates Options for Students

Running Start creates an alternative way for students to transition to college. Running Start and other dual-credit programs provide post-secondary schooling for students whose options may otherwise be limited. For high school students, Running Start is one of the most readily available college-level learning opportunities in the state.

Some high schools consider the college classes available to their students through Running Start to be part of the high school curriculum. Running Start and other dual-enrollment programs have made inroads on integrating the two systems. This integration allows students to more easily navigate the education system.

**Running Start Continues to Grow**

In 2001-02, Running Start completed its eleventh year as a successful and popular program for eligible high school juniors and seniors. Enrollment totaled 14,313 individual students, (equal to 8,521 full-time students), an increase of about 4 percent over the previous year when 13,669 students (8,189 FTE) participated. This is about equal to the overall growth in eleventh and twelfth graders. Previously the program had been growing faster than the growth in the high school population.




The Running Start program continues to enjoy positive public support. Statewide, support for the Running Start program is strong among Washington adults. A 2002 statewide community perception analysis conducted by Market Research Services showed that 73 percent of adults support Running Start, up from 68 percent four years earlier.

**Benefits for Students, Families and State Budgets are Evident**

*Students and Their Families*
Running Start presents a challenging option for qualified students who may perform better in a college setting than in a traditional high school. Students continue to report that taking classes with regular college students and adults offers a new and demanding dimension to learning. Junior and senior students, as defined by the high school, who are qualified for admission as determined by the higher education institutions, may participate in Running Start free of tuition. However, they must provide their own transportation, books and supplies. By allowing students to obtain high school and college credit simultaneously, Running Start reduces the amount of time students spend in school and reduces college costs for students and their families. In some cases, the dual-credit nature of the program allows students to complete four years of education while only attending two years. This saves money for the state and the students or their parents.

Flexibility in scheduling allows Running Start students to meet other commitments for education, jobs or family responsibilities. In fall 2001, 42 percent of the students worked part time and 1 percent worked full time.

*Budget*
Colleges are reimbursed by the K-12 districts whose students participated in Running Start. For the 2001-02 academic year, colleges received a statewide standard rate of approximately $85 per credit for academic programs, and $101 per credit for vocational programs. K-12 districts retain 7 percent of the state funds for counseling and overhead.

When students earn credit for high school and college simultaneously, the state pays to support this education only once.

- With 8,521 FTE students in 2001-02, Running Start saved Washington taxpayers $34.7 million.
- Students and their parents also save because Running Start classes are offered tuition-free. In the last academic year, this resulted in a savings of about $17.4 million in tuition.
- The total amount saved by taxpayers, parents and students in 2001-02 is estimated at over $52 million.

**Characteristics of Running Start Students – Fall 2001**

Running Start students continue to perform well in two-year colleges and after transferring to universities. The grade point average for all Running Start students in two-year institutions is comparable to similar two-year college students. In 2001-02, after transfer to the University of Washington, students continued with solid performance, averaging a GPA of 3.13.

The demographics of Running Start students in fall 2001, as a group, were very similar to those of previous years:

- 58 percent of the students were female.
- Over 18 percent were students of color.
- The average credit load taken by the students was 11-12 credits per quarter. 74 percent took 10 or more credits during fall 2001. Many students took one five-credit course per quarter at college with the balance of classes taken in high school.
- 2 percent were students with disabilities.
- 42 percent of the students worked part time; 1 percent worked full time.
- 87 percent of the courses taken were in academic transfer (primarily courses in social science, English, speech and humanities), 13 percent of the courses were vocational.

**Research Findings**

Western Washington University's recent study about how Running Start students transition into the university showed:

- Study participants reported feeling well prepared academically for Western. Students found community college a good bridge to the four-year environment. As one student said, "Community college was very, very hard and it definitely prepared me

academically." Having already learned to navigate the culture of one college system, they felt well prepared to tackle another.
- All students said that their exposure to the broader range of courses at the community college had helped them choose their major field of study at Western.

A national study of dual-credit programs released last year by the Pew Charitable Foundation lists a number of benefits of such programs, including savings in both costs and time, efficiency of learning (reduced repetition between grades 11-14), enhanced admission and retention rates in college, improved transitions from high school to college, allowing students to "test the waters" of college learning, improving students' access to college and providing professional development for faculty in high schools and colleges. This study found that:

- By creating alternatives to traditional high-school-to-college transition, dual credit programs provide additional points of entry into post-secondary schooling for students whose options would otherwise be much more limited.
- Dual-credit programs can blur the line between high school and college by integrating the two systems and thereby create a continuum of learning from high school to college.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy released a study in 2001 that indicated:

- Running Start is the most readily available college-learning option for high school students.
- About half of the high schools report increases in enrollment and offerings of other college-learning opportunities in the last three years. High schools are trying to encourage students to stay on the high school campus by creating learning options to compete with Running Start.

**Updates**

*Running Start slated to be available at The Evergreen State College*
The 2002 legislature added Evergreen to the list of universities eligible to participate in Running Start. Three universities were added to the Running Start legislation in 1994 so students who lived in areas where there was not a community or technical college could have access to the program. The addition of Evergreen may signal an emphasis on providing high school students a range of options beyond local two-year colleges.

*Admission Policies*
High school principals have expressed concern about whether the Running Start admission criteria are consistent and rigorous enough. In response to this concern, the community and technical college presidents commissioned a work group to look into the issue. A comparison of entrance requirements at each college in the state suggested that the local admission process typically requires students to successfully complete standardized reading, writing, and/or math skills tests in order to enroll. The work group analyzed which classes students are able to take as a result of passing each section of these standardized tests. While there is some variation in the scores required by the colleges, the analysis revealed that scores required for Running Start admission were consistent with the scores required for any other student to be placed in a

college-level course. The work group also examined the colleges' academic progress policies and recommended that colleges implement an early intervention system for students who are not doing well academically.

*Certificate of Mastery*
There is much discussion about the connection between the Certificate of Mastery and Running Start. In order to study this issue in more depth, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges jointly sponsored research on the relationship between the standardized tests used for admission by the colleges and the WASL assessment. An executive summary of this study can be requested from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges or from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; the full study is available for download at http://www.k12.wa.us/Research/.

The presidents of the community and technical colleges have tasked a committee to make recommendations about how WASL scores might be taken into account in the Running Start admission process. While the two-year college system is committed to finding ways of linking WASL performance to success in life after high school, WASL scores are being discussed as an additional tool to consider for course placement decisions, not as a replacement for the current standardized tests used by local colleges. This committee will begin its work in January 2003, and participants include representatives from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, universities, two-year colleges and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. The committee is scheduled to make recommendations by Spring 2003.

*National Dual-enrollment Trend Continues*
States are increasingly implementing policies that encourage postsecondary institutions to offer dual/concurrent enrollment courses to high school students. This is due, in part, to the desire to provide advanced academic opportunities to high school students and also to smooth the transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

Dual enrollment has sparked national interest because it is seen to provide:

- Greater access to a wider variety of rigorous academic and technical courses,
- Savings in time and money on a college degree,
- Pathways for students to move "seamlessly" between the K-12 and postsecondary systems,
- Greater collaboration between high school and college faculty and programs, and
- Greater support for students' college aspirations.

Currently, 38 states have adopted policies that encourage some type of dual enrollment approach, while another 10 have institutional-level concurrent enrollment agreements.

At the federal level, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 provides funds to states for the expansion and improvement of Tech Prep programs, including the development of articulation agreements between high schools and colleges that link their course offerings and credit for programs in high-growth technical occupations.

**Summary**

Serving 14,313 students in 2002, Running Start continues to be an excellent program option for qualified juniors and seniors. Students and their parents strongly support the program because it expands their educational choices while reducing the time and expense of completing their education. This year alone, students and their parents saved $17.4 million in tuition. Washington state taxpayers benefited by saving $34.7 million in state support because of the dual-credit awarded to students. The Running Start program has established itself as a significant success to date, and ongoing work with the K-12 system and secondary schools in particular will ensure that Running Start continues to help students achieve high academic standards at a lower overall cost to their families and the state.

**Running Start Enrollments**
**Academic Year 2001-02**

| College | FTEs | Headcount |
|---|---|---|
| Bates | 127 | 98 |
| Bellevue | 434 | 729 |
| Bellingham | 47 | 67 |
| Big Bend | 145 | 226 |
| Cascadia | 180 | 322 |
| Centralia | 201 | 278 |
| Clark | 358 | 771 |
| Clover Park | 80 | 85 |
| Columbia Basin | 322 | 491 |
| Edmonds | 337 | 611 |
| Everett | 339 | 536 |
| Grays Harbor | 93 | 184 |
| Green River | 571 | 892 |
| Highline | 435 | 706 |
| Lake Washington | 13 | 31 |
| Lower Columbia | 204 | 300 |
| Olympic | 346 | 524 |
| Peninsula | 259 | 416 |
| Pierce Puyallup | 216 | 405 |
| Pierce Steilacoom | 214 | 423 |
| Renton | 66 | 76 |
| Seattle Central | 279 | 530 |
| Seattle North | 176 | 330 |
| Seattle South | 157 | 287 |
| Shoreline | 183 | 323 |
| Skagit Valley | 397 | 728 |
| South Puget Sound | 321 | 600 |
| Spokane | 270 | 404 |
| Spokane Falls | 384 | 560 |
| Tacoma | 358 | 634 |
| Walla Walla | 103 | 228 |
| Wenatchee Valley | 209 | 321 |
| Whatcom | 463 | 822 |
| Yakima Valley | 233 | 375 |
| **College Total** | | 14,313 |
| **System Total** | 8,521 | 13,967 |

Source: SBCTC data warehouse.
Statewide unduplicated total enrollment was 13,967.
A few Running Start students took courses at more than one college.

## University of Washington
## Running Start Students' Transfer Performance
## Data for Students Entering Fall 2001

| | # of Students | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| **Total Number of Students** | 920 | |
| **Gender** | | |
| Male | 419 | 45.5% |
| Female | 501 | 54.5% |
| **Entering College Class** | | |
| Freshman | 753 | 81.8% |
| Sophomore | 100 | 10.9% |
| Junior | 67 | 7.3% |
| **Ethnic Distribution** | | |
| African-American | 24 | 2.6% |
| Asian-American | 275 | 29.9% |
| Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 4 | 0.4% |
| Hispanic | 39 | 4.2% |
| Native American | 9 | 1.0% |
| White | 460 | 50.0% |
| Other/Not Indicated | 109 | 11.8% |

| | Mean | Range |
|---|---|---|
| **High School GPA** | 3.67 | 2.59-4.00 |
| **SAT Verbal** | 572 | 290-800 |
| **SAT Math** | 591 | 320-800 |
| **SAT Total** | 1,163 | 680-1,580 |
| **ACT Score** | 24.9 | 14-35 |
| **Entering Transfer Credits** | 39.1 | 3-90 |

| | # of Students |
|---|---|
| **Completing Associate Degrees** | 51 |
| **Largest Feeder High Schools** | |
| 1. Roosevelt | 30 |
| 2. Kamiak | 27 |
| 3. Kentwood | 18 |
| 4. Henry M Jackson (tie) | 17 |
| Kentridge (tie) | 17 |
| Lake Washington (tie) | 17 |
| 7. Garfield (tie) | 15 |
| Decatur (tie) | 15 |
| **Largest Feeder Community Colleges** | |
| 1. Bellevue | 86 |
| 2. Everett | 73 |
| 3. Green River | 53 |
| 4. Clark | 51 |
| 5. Edmonds | 48 |
| 6. Highline | 44 |

**UW Performance**

| | Autumn 2001 | Winter 2002 | Spring 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **GPA** | | | |
| Running Start | 3.14 | 3.12 | 3.13 |
| Freshman | 3.14 | 3.09 | 3.12 |
| Community College | 3.15 | 3.16 | 3.20 |
| **Credits Earned** | | | |
| Running Start | 14.2 | 13.8 | 13.4 |
| Freshman | 14.8 | 14.0 | 13.9 |
| Community College | 11.9 | 12.4 | 12.6 |
| **Continuation Rate** | | | |
| Running Start | Not Yet Available | | |

Source: Compiled by Jim Rawlins, University of Washington.

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For more information see the
SBCTC Web site at http://www.sbctc.ctc
or contact:
Sally Zeiger Hanson
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
P O Box 42495
319 7th Avenue
Olympia, WA 98504-2495
360-704-4334
shanson@sbctc.ctc.edu
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